

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – July 27th, 2021

OSF Welcomes Drought Aid for Northwestern Ontario

Guelph, ON – Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) welcomes the news of increased financial support for northern Ontario producers in the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. The announcement, made earlier today, is in response to the devastating drought conditions currently faced by those communities. The new Northern Livestock Emergency Assistance Initiative announcement was made by Minister of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, Lisa Thompson on behalf of the government of Ontario.

This initiative will provide up to \$800,000 to help address the immediate livestock feed shortages for impacted farmers in the region. It also brings an additional \$1.2 million that will be made available to area farmers for emergency measures to source water/drill wells for livestock, and to purchase and install new fencing. Program delivery will be made through AgriCorp and the financial assistance will be available to livestock farmers for eligible costs incurred due to dry weather beginning June 14th, 2021.

“Today’s announcement is a welcome relief. These supports are vital and must continue to be made available to address urgent situations like the northwestern Ontario drought,” says Marc Carere, OSF Chair. “We will work with our farmers, other industry organizations and the provincial and federal governments to help those experiencing the drought right now. And we will continue to find solutions that support our producers, especially in times of crisis.”

OSF thanks the Provincial Government for their prompt actions that will ensure much-needed supports are available for our sheep producers at this critical time. We know the current drought situation in northwestern Ontario is critical, as farmers are facing serious challenges sourcing water and feed for their livestock. Last week, OSF representatives heard from farmers in that area as they shared their first-hand experiences dealing with water shortages, dwindling access to hay and the extreme toll this situation is taking on farmers, their families, and employees.

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Ontario Sheep Farmers (OSF) is a producer-run organization established in 1985 and represents the province’s 3,000 sheep farmers who contribute over \$530 million to Ontario’s economy. Ontario is home to the country’s largest sheep flock and processes over 50% of the sheep and lambs born in Canada. We believe passionately that sheep farming is an agricultural business sector that is profitable, contributes to the well-being of our communities and our province and offers unique opportunities to develop new markets, provide needed environmental benefits and grow both our domestic and international markets.

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